# The Orthodox Herald

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## MY LORD AND MY GOD!

Michel de Montaigne, the renowned 16th century French writer, gives us a valuable insight into wisdom. He says: "The most lasting sign of wisdom is continual rejoicing."

The time after Pascha gives us much occasion to find this joy because we are always invited to remember that: "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"

We remember how Jesus' disciple, Thomas, made this joyous discovery. He did not want to let himself believe in the possibility of the resurrection. Perhaps it was because no one likes to be disappointed. Besides it is not often that someone could truly rise from the dead.

But Jesus satisfied all the demands of this skeptic in order for him to come to believe in what he had thought to be impossible and Thomas responded with this marvelous cry of faith: "My Lord and my God!" He found that sometimes that which we most desire is also what God has ordained for us!

After this joyous reunion between Thomas and His Lord, the now-believing Thomas had an important responsibility. He was to share the good news of the Resurrection with all the world. This led ultimately to his own sacrifice of life on earth for life in heaven as Jesus had revealed.

But he must certainly have done all he did with the sort of joy of which Montaigne speaks. Let us also be joyous. Let us express the joy of the victory of life, of divine love everywhere and always. The Lord is truly risen. He is with us today and forever!

**Ihor George Kutash, Priest**

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All healing is a gift from God, whether the means is through good medicine, prayer or both.

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It would be better if parents would spend as much time praying with and for their children as they do worrying about them.



COME, RECEIVE THE LIGHT
FROM THE UNWANING LIGHT
AND GLORIFY CHRIST
RISEN FROM THE DEAD!

## ORTHODOX CHURCH LIFE

The life of pious families revolved around the spiritual life of the Church. Family life resounded with echoes of churchliness, and was carried along by a great continuing flow of liturgical celebrations. Feasts and fasts were observed – no butter, no milk, no meat, no eggs. During the first and last weeks of the purifying days of the Great Fast, and the days of Holy Week and Pascha, whole families went to church with their children. The schedule of the day was adapted to the services of the Church, especially when the last moments of our Lord's earthly life were being relived step by step through His Passion, Death on the Cross, Burial and Resurrection. The night of Holy Friday to Holy Saturday was spent at the Burial Service of Christ. The whole church glowed with innumerable candles held by the faithful, and all participated in a solemn procession around the church, as a shroud depicting the Lord lying in His tomb was carried on the head of the priest, above a thronging crowd. Pascha Night was the greatest, most joyous and

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## VISION OF ST. SERAPHIM

We read in "Lives of the Saints" that some saints have visions, especially when absorbed in prayer during church services. We occasionally hear that someone today has had such a vision but they are afraid to tell about it for fear that "people will think I'm nuts." They should discuss it with their spiritual father and ask for guidance.

St. Seraphim had visions. The one he had on Great Thursday, a day when many choose to stay away from the long, tiring service, was told in his "Spiritual Biography" by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore.

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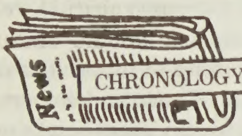
"And once during the Liturgy, he was granted such a vision as has been granted to only a few saints and only to the greatest of them.

'Once I happened to be serving as Deacon on Holy and Great Thursday. The Divine Liturgy began at two o'clock in the afternoon and, as usual, was preceded by Vespers. After the little entry and the readings, I, poor sinner that I am, exclaimed in the royal doors: 'O Lord, save the pious, and hear us,' and entering the royal doors and holding up my stole to the people, I finished: 'And to the ages of ages,' when suddenly I was struck by a ray of sunlight.

Glancing at this radiance, I saw our Lord and God Jesus Christ, in the image of the Son of Man, shining with glory and unutterable light, surrounded by heavenly Powers, Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, as if by a swarm of bees, and proceeding through the air from the western doors of the Church. On reaching the ambon (the rounded elevated area in front of the Royal Doors), the Lord raised His most pure hands and blessed the Clergy and the congregation: and then stepped into His holy local Icon, which is to the right of the royal gates. He was transfigured, surrounded by choirs of Angels, who shone with unutterable light

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DIED: Fr. Andrew Hutnyan in Manville, NJ (ACR)

Fr. Frank Mesaros in Shillington, PA (retired) ACR)

Fr. John Rachko in Port St. Lucie, FL (retired) (OCA)

Matushka Suzanne Janos (wife of Fr. Stephen) in Buffalo, NY (OCA)

FRATERNAL ENCOUNTER II was held by Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox hierarchs in St. Petersburg, FL in February. They designated Thomas Sunday, April 18, as a day of prayer and commemoration of the victims of the forced famine in Ukraine in 1932-33. It is suggested that Ukrainians around the world light a candle so that at least 10 million candles are lighted around the world in the memory of the 10 million who perished. The next Fraternal Encounter III has been set for August 6-7.

THE TRANSFER OF CHURCHES continues in the Eparchy of Mukachevo in the Transcarpathian region of the Ukraine. The Orthodox community has turned over its church in Osii, Irshava district, and plans to return the churches in Velyki Lazy, Benedykivtsi, Zarichchia and Sasiv. A new Orthodox church in the village center is almost completed in Osii. To mark the occasion, Bishop Milan Sasik of the Eastern-rite Catholics celebrated a liturgy for the faithful of the two communities and called upon his faithful to help the Orthodox complete construction of their new church.

EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO PRESERVE historic, wooden log churches in northeastern Slovakia. Most of them were built from the late 1600's to the early 1700's. One of the churches is in the Carpathian Mountains between Stropkov and Svidnik in Eastern Slovakia. St. Paraskeva was built in 1773 in the village of Potoky, which now has 75 inhabitants who have an unemployment rate of 50% and cannot fund the restoration, which is estimated to cost $78,000.

PREACHING ANOTHER CHRIST is a booklet containing a translation of a letter St. Theophan the Recluse wrote in answer to some questions about the difference between the Russian Orthodox faith and an evangelical one brought by itinerant preachers into a village near the monastery, where he resided. Send $4.50 plus shipping to Orthodox Witness, PO Box 81, Maryville, IL 62052. For info www.orthodoxwitness.org. The writing is clear and not "politically correct."

TWO ROMANIAN ASTRONOMERS of the Astronomic Observatory in Cluj, Romania checked astronomical calculations against New Testament references, especially Mark 15:33. "And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour," and determined that Jesus died at 3 p.m., Friday, April 3, A.D. 33, placed the crucifixion the day after the first night with a full moon following the vernal equinox. Records showing a solar eclipse in Jerusalem further convinced them.

The Resurrection occurred precisely at 4 a.m., Sunday, April 15, A.D. 33 according to their determination.

SURPRISED TO READ IN AN Anchorage, Alaska newspaper reports of paintball attacks on native Alaskans, many of whom are our Orthodox brothers and sisters. Civil rights investigations are under way.

SUBSCRIBERS are assured that in all our years of publishing we have never sold or given our subscription list to anyone and we plan to continue this policy.

THE ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL in Havana, Cuba was dedicated to the honor of St. Nicholas. Patriarch Bartholomeos of Constantinople took part in the dedication and festivities.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH OFFICIALS in Israel complain about harassment of their people. "They spit upon us and swear at us when we walk down the street." Demands were also made to Israel officials to make it easier for religious figures from abroad to obtain visas to enter the country.

THOSE INTERESTED IN GENEALOGY OR other aspects of immigration from Galicia, also known as Lemoko land or old Austro-Hungarian Empire, should order Carpatho-Rus, PO Box 156, Allentown, NJ 08501. Printed in English and Lemko, it contains articles about villages, customs, people and activities in the U.S.

ST. ALEXEI CARPATHSKY was glorified in 2001. He was born in Yasini in 1877 and went to St. Pantelimon's Monastery on Mt. Athos. Upon returning to the Carpathian region, he was arrested and exiled because of his Orthodox faith. He came to the U.S. in 1913 and, with the blessing of Metropolitan Platon, visited all the Carpatho-Russian parishes, which were being formed. He returned to his home and in 1914 was assigned to a parish for a short time. (Where?) His relics are kept at St. Nicholas Monastery in Iza, Zakarpatia, Ukraine. He was a contemporary of St. Alexei of Wilkes-Barre.

VESPERS OF PENTECOST were held in a public park in Edmonton, Canada last year. Eleven Orthodox parishes of various ethnic background participated. Texts were furnished for participants. A picnic was held following the service.

AFTER 30 MONTHS, Patriarch Irenaios I, who was elected head of the church in Jerusalem, was recognized by the Israel government. The Patriarchate owns or leases big areas in Jerusalem, including affluent parts of the Jewish west and even the land on which Israel's president and prime resident resides.

THERE IS A NATIONAL PRAYER GROUP whose purpose is to provide a balanced daily rule of prayer for those who wish to deepen their spiritual life and to pray as Orthodox have done for generations. To become a member, send $25 to Fr. James Kenna, St. Philip's Prayer Discipline, 10304 Darden Hill Rd., Austin, TX 78737. You will receive a prayer manual, a spiritual book with Orthodox teaching.

(Continued from front page)

## ORTHODOX CHURCH LIFE

most intimate family festival that people knew. The explosive joy of the midnight service, the church bells pealing from towers all across the Russian land, bonfires and the illumination of churches, lighted candles, alternating chants of choirs, and greetings with the Kiss of Peace all communicated the gladness about Christ's victory over death. Afterwards, people gathered in their homes around a sumptuous paschal table, decorated and well provided on this night even in the most humble homes. This was not just a treat after the long days of the Great Feast, but it was a feast of joy and spiritual communion among members of the family and the household. This was pure and innocent human joy, illuminated by the rays of the Lord's victory over death. Family life was brightened by the glory of Pascha. For several days, a ray of the transfiguration penetrated through the routine of ordinary life. The experience of Pascha was one of the greatest treasures of religious and family traditions in the Orthodox world.

Nicholas Arceniev in Russian Piety

(Continued from front page)

## VISION OF ST. SERAPHIM

all through the Church, And I, who am dust and ashes, by meeting the Lord Jesus then in the air, was granted a special blessing from Him; my heart felt pure, enlightened joy in the sweetness of love for the Lord!'

St. Seraphim's appearance changed and struck by divine vision, he could not even move from his place by the royal gates. When Father Pachomius noticed this, he sent two other Hierodeacons, who took him under his arms and led him into the Sanctuary. But he continued to stand there motionless for about three hours in ecstasy. And only his face constantly changed, now it would become white as snow, now a flush would spread all over it.

After the Service the Elders asked him what happened. And Father Seraphim, who hid nothing from his spiritual Fathers, told them everything. They gave him the commandment to enclose himself in silence and to immerse himself still more deeply in humility, and to beware of arrogance from such an unusual vision. The Saint accepted their instructions with whole-hearted meekness and remained silent for the time being."

## SACRAMENT OF REPENTANCE

We will examine the Sacrament of Repentance (also known as Reconciliation or Confession) as understood and practiced throughout the Orthodox Church. The membership in our Church is comprised of Orthodox Christians from various cultural backgrounds. Not all of these cultural backgrounds approach the Sacrament of Confession in the same manner.

Where people from one background were taught to go to Confession frequently, others were taught to go infrequently, while others were not taught to go at all. In America, we are taught by our society to be very independent individuals and to 'pick and choose' 'whatever and whenever' so we are inclined to choose not to participate in anything that may be inconvenient, painful, embarrassing or just does not 'feel good.' However, our Lord teaches us that repentance is exactly inconvenient, at times painful, embarrassing or 'does not feel good' to our pride. When we face our conscience and pride honestly, we have to choose between following our Lord into the Kingdom or to follow our own agenda in this world which may lead to eternal life away from the Kingdom and the presence of God. We must always be cognizant that our Lord told us, His disciples, "you are in this world but not of this world."

The Church reminds us that General Confession is not a substitute for Private Confession; it is a supplement to Private Confession. It helps us to develop a more complete and in-depth examination of conscience, to recognize what are sins, develop a greater sense of repentance and sincere sorrow for the sins we have committed. Private Confession should be an important part of our lives, especially during the four major periods of Fasting prescribed by the Church; Advent, Great Lent, the Apostles Fast and the Dormition Fast.

It is very important to keep in mind that receiving Absolution is not an 'automatic thing' - just for having come to Confession. The Confessor is responsible for protecting the purity and integrity of the Sacraments. He has Scripture, Holy Tradition, training, experience to enable him to discern whether genuine repentance has brought the person standing before him to Confession; that he/she fully understands the full depth of the sin(s) committed, that he/she, with the help of God, promises to work hard to fulfill the exhortation by our Lord to the woman taken in adultery; 'go in peace and sin no more.' (John 8:11). Should the Confessor sense, determine, or be told that complete sincerity does not exist in this confession, he can withhold Absolution. Through compassion and deep concern for the spiritual well-being of this person he should encourage a meeting or series of meetings to discuss the meaning, depth and importance of the Sacrament of Confession in our journey to the Kingdom of God and our life in the Orthodox Church as community. Please read the parable of the Prodigal Son (St. Luke 15:11-32) to better understand the Orthodox approach to repentance, confession, Absolution and restoration to complete 'Sonship.' A person who has not received Absolution at a Confession should not approach the Chalice (Holy Communion) until he/she has received permission from his/her Confessor.

The Eucharist or Holy Communion is not 'an automatic thing' for Orthodox Christians. Preparation is necessary; in-depth examination of conscience, repentance of one's sins, prayer, fasting with all the senses (sight, hearing, speaking, etc.), from food (except when health problems require medication or food - as with diabetics) and from the passions (sexual activities, et al.).

Fr. Vladimir Lecko

The chandelier in the center of the church is not just a source of light or a fancy decoration. There are specific instructions in church books when it should be lighted. For example, at the PreSanctified Liturgy, it is dimly lighted at the beginning. At the singing of "O Joyful Light" (which reminds us that Christ is the Joyful Light of the eternal father) the chandelier is brightly lighted and all the lights of the church are turned on to remind us that GOD IS WITH US.

## FRIENDS OF ORTHODOX ALASKA

When Orthodox missionaries arrived in Alaska in 1794, their purpose was to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the Russian American Company and to teach the Native Alaskans about Jesus Christ and to preach His message of salvation.

Although they endured many hardships and literally risked their lives, they brought the Word of God to the people of this vast, new land. For over four decades, one humble monk carried on the solitary task of ministering and teaching. Spruce Island became the site of the school and orphanage established by St. Herman of Alaska.

In 1844, the first theological school was organized and continued to operate until 1917, when funding stopped due to the Russian Revolution. While other jurisdictions sent priests from their own countries to America, no more clergy arrived in Alaska from Russia. For over fifty years, the Faith was maintained and even grew due to the hard work and cooperation of the laity and a small number of priests.

By 1973, the great need for trained religious leaders in Alaska was evident, and St. Herman Pastoral School was established. Four years later, it was recognized by the OCA and renamed St. Herman Theological Seminary. Its purpose has been to prepare Native Alaskans to serve as priests, deacons, monastics, and choir directors in the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Alaska. Today, the majority of Alaska's 30+ priests are graduates of St. Herman seminary.

In 1980, an organization was founded to provide financial support for the seminary. Their name, *Ilaasi,* was taken from Alutiiq, the native language of Kodiak Island. It means "your friends."

Over the years, much assistance has been provided through the generosity of Ilaasi, Friends of St. Herman's Seminary. In 2003 alone, the seminary kitchen and library were renovated, along with repairs to other seminary buildings.

The FOCA (formerly FROC) has also provided various means of help to the seminary and the Diocese of Alaska. Much needed religious articles and church supplies have been sent to parishes in Alaska through the FOCA Mission Hotline. Through this program, articles no longer used in parishes are redirected to churches where there is a need.

Through their Gifts of Love Project, FOCA chapters are currently raising funds for the purchase of a new van that will replace the van they donated eighteen years ago. Much credit should be given to an enthusiastic group of young adults from the Cleveland "R" Club who recently raised $2,350.35 for this project. (Way to go, Chapter 4/6!!)

For the past several years, the FOCA has also provided grants of up to $1,500 to Orthodox Christians selected as members of OCMC Short-Term Mission Teams around the world. I am a grateful recipient of last year's scholarship, which provided me with the opportunity to work as a missionary in Alaska.

Since 200, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center has sent mission teams to Alaska to offer retreats, catechism, youth camps, and support and encouragement to the faithful. This year a teaching team will be going to the Pribilof Islands, while a construction team will complete much-needed repairs to Ss. Sergius and Herman Chapel on Spruce Island. A third group, a dental care team, will spend a week in Bethel on the Kuskokwim River.

In addition to meeting the material needs of the seminary, students are also being assisted. Due to the high rate of unemployment in many villages, students often incur debts for their education that they are unable to pay. Through Outreach Alaska's Adopt-A-Seminarian Program, students are eligible to receive full-tuition scholarships for up to three years after successfully completing their first year of seminary training.

For many years, The Orthodox Herald has been a valuable means of information for Orthodox Christians in Alaska. Its editors recognized the need in Alaska for such a publication, and readers generously responded. Through donations to the "Alaska Fund," parishes throughout Alaska receive packets of The Orthodox Herald each month. With so many communities without full-time priests, it has been a constant source of spiritual guidance for the faithful.

Much has been done through the above organizations, but the needs are still great. For more information and/or to make a donation, please contact the following:

Ilaasi, Friends of St. Herman's Seminary
St. Herman Theological Seminary
414 Mission Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

FOCA Mission Hotline Project
Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America
6610 Cypress Point Road
Alexandria, VA 22312

Gifts of Love Project
Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America
6474 State Road, I-16
Parma, OH 44134

Short-Term Missionaries
Orthodox Christian Mission Center
P.O. Box 4319
St. Augustine, FL 32085

Adopt A Seminarian
Outreach Alaska
2421 Perry
Wichita, KS 67204

Alaskan Fund
The Orthodox Herald
P.O. Box 9
Hunlock Creek, PA 18621

Margaret Pysarchyk

## TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

You should take the religious education of your children seriously. This education will affect their behaviour and attitude for the rest of their lives. The sad fact is that too many young people simply don't know the basics of their faith. Religious education classes do their part, but unless parents take an active part this will usually achieve very little.

Parents need to train their children at home in the basic teachings of the Church and to review their religious lessons. If children don't know them, the basic prayers, parents must teach them: the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Beginning Prayers of Morning and Evening and of most services.

## THE GIFT OF PRAYER

There are many beautiful ways to show your love for others. One way is to exchange gifts in the forms of presents during Christmastime or other holiday seasons, a birthday, baptisms, reception into the faith, a wedding, anniversary or graduation. Sometimes the gifts are monetary, or have a personal touch like a homemade craft or an eatable item. Another mode of giving is time in the form of volunteerism at your church, community center or some worthy cause; it may even be donating blood to your local Red Cross. All these forms when expressed from the heart represent the best of human affection.

There is another meaningful and special gift that you can give others. It is the gift of prayer. It can be given at anytime, in every place, or circumstance and has much spiritual benefit. It can be offered for specific individuals or various intentions.

When Jesus was asked by His disciples on how to pray, He taught them: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil *(Matthew 6:9-13)*." Many of the Church Fathers have called the Lord's Prayer "the perfect prayer." "The same Lord who made us," says Saint Cyprian of Carthage, "also taught us how to pray, so that our petitions will be more easily heard, when we speak to the father in the words offered to us by his Son."

Jesus' whole life became a perfect prayer. Even when hanging on the cross, the dying Jesus prayed that those who crucified Him be forgiven. *(Luke 23:34)* He invites us also to dedicate ourselves totally to God just as He did.

Because of their commitment to pray for others, many people compile a list of names of the living and the departed called "diptychs." It is a practical way to remember them during morning and evening prayers and also on the five days of the "General Commemoration for the Departed."

Many churches set up "prayer circles" in which parishioners are asked to pray for each other and various life circumstances that arise. Lifting up others before the Throne of God in prayer is without doubt a genuine act of love. Saint Paul wrote to those in the Church at Rome, that, "without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers." *(Romans 1:9)*

The meaning of intercessory prayer can be summed up with the phrase that we so often hear in our liturgical services: "Let us commend ourselves, one another and all of our lives to Christ our God.

Raymond J. Mastroberte
Iconographer

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## LIGHTER MOMENT

A college drama group presented a play in which one character would stand on a trap door and announce: "I descend into hell!"

A stagehand below would then pull a rope, the trapdoor would open, and the character would plunge through. The play was well received. However, when the actor playing the part became ill, another actor, who was quite overweight, took his place.

When the new actor announced: "I descend into hell!" the stagehand pulled the rope, and on cue, the actor began his plunge, but soon became hopelessly stuck. No amount of tugging would loosen him so that he could make his descent.

Finally, one student in the balcony jumped up and yelled: "Hallelujah! Hell is full!"

## REAL GRASS

Those shopping for "grass" to use in their Easter baskets and/or for use in doing crafts find not only the traditional green in various shades but pink, yellow, lavender and other colors. Looking at decorating magazines, we see suggestions to use containers of real grass a few inches tall.

Before artificial grass was available, real grass was sown in a container and used at Easter. When the eggs for the day were colored, some of the eggs were placed on the grass. This was used as a centerpiece. A recent edition of "Country Living" tells how to grow the grass. It says to fill a container with at least 2 inches of potting soil. Sprinkle with wheatgrass seeds (available in health-food stores), or with a grass seed with much rye in the combination, and water until soil is damp. Place container in sunny window, keeping soil moist. Grass will sprout in about six days.

In Europe, our relatives use a fairly deep platter and make a panorama with eggs, plastic bunnies, etc.

One of my friends sent me this story which tells about this tradition.

A blizzard scooped up snow from the Ukrainian steppes and hurled it against the windowpanes of my childhood home. Inside our small kitchen, however, mother had prepared a happy Easter surprise. An awestruck 6-year-old, I glazed at the red, blue, green, and yellow Easter eggs nestled among a forest of rye shoots, five inches high, growing in a rusty old dishpan.

Not until I was an adult did I grasp the significance of my mother's creativity. During the early 1940s, I was too young to be worried about the privations World War II had brought into our lives. Food was scarce, fuel was almost gone. Such luxuries as egg coloring could not be found. Mother had used onion skins, moss, a bleeding piece of fabric, and a few drops of ink. Despite our hardships, she had created a joyous Easter celebration for us children.

Two years later, we fled our home in Eastern Europe and eventually settled in Canada. Life became easier, and we no longer worried about food, fuel, and egg coloring.

But the joy of that celebration has remained with me. At times, the chaos of my life threatens to overwhelm me. It is hard to see how I'm going to keep going. Then I remember Mother and the maxim she lived by: in a world of chaos, find a corner where you still have control and fill it with beauty. Then share it with others.

## THE DAYS BETWEEN

Great Lent is over on the Friday evening which follows the fifth Sunday or the Sunday on which Mary of Egypt is commemorated (March 28). Lazarus Saturday (April 3) and the Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday, April 4) are the days between Great Lent and Holy or Passion Week.

Lazarus Saturday is a Scriptural Day. We read about it in John 11:1-45. The Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem is also a Scriptural Day, we read about it in John 12:1-18, Matt 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-40. These days are full of sadness, yet of hope.

Jesus had been asked to come to the home of Martha and Mary because their brother Lazarus had died. Jesus raised him from the dead, giving us the assurance that He will do the same for us. This was in Bethany, from which He left on His Triumphant trip to Jerusalem.

The hymns on the services for this day give us an interpretation of some of the sentences of the reading given from John 11:1-45. "O Christ God, when You did raise Lazarus from the dead, before Your Passion, You did confirm the universal resurrection." "Before Your Death, You have shaken the power of death."

The resurrection of Lazarus has many lessons to give. Besides the hope of the resurrection of the dead, it allows us to hope that even though we may sin and be spiritually dead, we could become alive again." So I pray to Thee, O Thou lover of mankind to raise me to life, I, who through my passions (sins) am dead." Sometimes this spiritual resurrection seems as impossible as that of Lazarus but all things are possible to Jesus – the conversion of the most hardened sinner as much as the raising of the dead.

This wish for release from sin is the reason why many people make their required Easter/Pascha confession on this day.

## ANOTHER INBETWEEN DAY

The triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before His Passion is counted among the twelve major Holy Days in the Church. We can read about it in all four Gospels: Matthew 12:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:1-18. It has various names from the branches which are blessed on this day – Vaj Nedilja from the Palms blessed, Verbna Nedilja from the pussywillows and Cvitna from the branches of lilac, olive and elder.

The blessing of the branches takes place at Matins, while Psalm 51 (50) is sung. If Matins are not served, the preferred time is before the Divine Liturgy, so that the faithful can hold the branches with a candle during the Liturgy.

Willows are used in many Orthodox Churches because in the cold climate from where they originated, neither palm nor olive trees are able to grow. The willow tree seems to be dead throughout the cold winter; and yet during the coming of spring, it sprouts and gives signs of life. The willows or other branches should be taken home and placed in the ikon corner where they serve as a "sign of salvation" and a "pledge of protection and blessing" as is said at the blessing prayer.

There is a custom in certain areas of Eastern Europe of tapping the shoulder of someone with the blessed willow and reciting this wish: "This once-weeping willow today shouts with joy to Our Lord on His journey along the Via Dolorosa. The willow in the name of the Messiah blesses you with the robust health and unrelenting rock faith of Winter's stubbornness; it wishes you the bountiful loving Divine exuberance bursting out in blooming, dazzling Spring; it hopes for you an abundance of Christian deeds for all in the fruitful harvest of Fall; and finally the willow, in the name of the Lord and Holy Spirit, asks that your heart be sweet-tender, compassionate and warm as the light rays of Summer."

There are also shorter wishes.

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The Great Litany, which starts the Divine Liturgy, can be identified as the Prayers for Peace. In it we pray for three different kinds of peace. The first prayer: "In peace let us pray to the Lord." Is for peace in the congregation - no loud talking, or other distractions so that we put ourselves in the proper mood for prayer.

The second prayer is for "The peace from above..." We pray for the spiritual peace promised by Christ as we read in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

The third prayer for "The peace of the whole world..." is self-explanatory.

## *Undique (from everywhere)*

U.S. News and World Report recently reported that "In the past decade, more than 300 titles on workplace spirituality – from Jesus CEO to The Tao of Leadership – have flooded bookstores." This trend is merely a reflection of the fact that in spite of prosperity, there is a growing hunger for spiritual direction in life. The business journal Training and Development comments on this: "At a time when technology will drive every other aspect of our lives, we are searching for deeper meaning, for purpose, and for greater personal satisfaction."

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave His disciples a model upon which to base their prayers in Matthew 6:9-13. Eighteen months later Jesus repeated the essential points of the model prayer, the Lord's Prayer, which is recorded in Luke 11:1-1.

I received a letter from a priest who wrote that they order a few extra copies in their Packet Plan. He takes copies with him when he makes his sick calls. He, or a "sunshine committee" member, puts a stamp on some and sends copies to someone who is ill and has missed church services. "We never let copies just sit there. We do outreach."

At the blessing of willows and/or palms at the Holy Day of the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem, both "boughs of trees and branches of palms" are mentioned as both are included in the Gospels in which this event is discussed. (Matt 21:8 and John 12:13) However, as far back as the end of the 10th century, documents testify that in Constantinople, not only were palms blessed but also branches from olive or myrtle trees, lilac blossoms, laurel fronds and other "flowers of the season."

Tradition says that the Trisagion "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us" is sung at burials because Joseph of Arimathea sang this at the burial of Christ.

There is a vast difference between retaining with pride one's cultural heritage and refusing to assimilate into one's new culture.



# Editor's Notes

We have a new mailer. The resubscription slips, which he has been enclosing in the appropriate copies of the "Herald," have misspelled the word Herald. No, we have not changed to The Orthodox Hearald. It is a misprint. It is surprising how many of you noticed the error. We knew we had many "eagle eyes" among our readers.

It is difficult to see in some parishes, but the Orthodox Church nationwide is gaining many new members. Their reasons for accepting the Orthodox faith are varied, but the beauty of the services and the unchanging rules on fasting, prayer, church attendance and on the views on various social problems seem to be the reason so many give. STABILITY underlies all answers. However, this rush of converts does create friction as it is coming too fast for proper assimilation. Those in the faith must take the role of mentors. Our parents and relatives were our mentors. Those new to the faith need us to assume this role.

These past few months several miraculous ikons have been presented for veneration. Among them are the Tikhvin ikon and the Kursk ikon of the Mother of God. Tradition veneration methods seen are kissing the ikon, touching the baptismal cross to the ikon and/or touching the forehead to the ikon.

The aim of The Orthodox Herald has been an attempt to integrate Orthodox truths and teachings into our everyday life.

As this is being written, the movie The Passions is making many headlines. I have not seen it. However, for Orthodox Christians, hope is virtue gained through internalizing the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' life, death and Resurrection. When we make the story of Jesus' great act of love a part of our lives, it starts to make a difference in how we view our own lives and sufferings. Jesus' Resurrection fills us with hope that new life is possible for us.

The Resurrection also gives us hope that we will share in a like resurrection. This is a greatest gift that any message about a Holy Day can give us. Let's meditate on the Easter/Pascha hymn:

"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by (His) death, and upon those in the graves bestowing life!" CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

*Matushka Nina Stroyen*

## HOLY THURSDAY READINGS

The listing of the twelve selections from the Holy Scriptures, which are read on Holy Thursday evening, are given here for the convenience of those who take their Bibles to church to follow the readings as they are read and for those who cannot get to a church for the readings and do second best and read and meditate on the messages from them at home.

For those who want to do the readings in chronological order, the list 2 has been made, including all the prescribed readings in this sequence.

LIST 1 (as read in Church)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. John 13:31-18:1 | 7. Matt 27:33-54 |
| 2. John 18:1-18 | 8. Luke 23:32-49 |
| 3. Matt 26:57-75 | 9. John 19:25-37 |
| 4. John 18:28-19:16 | 10. Mark 15:43-47 |
| 5. Matt 27:3-32 | 11. John 19:38-42 |
| 6. Mark 15:16-32 | 12. Matt 27:62-66 |

LIST 2 (chronological list)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Matt 26:57-75 | 7. Luke 23:32-49 |
| 2. Matt 27:3-32 | 8. John 13:31-18:1 |
| 3. Matt 27:33-54 | 9. John 18:1-18 |
| 4. Matt 27:63-66 | 10. John 18:28-19:16 |
| 5. Mark 15:16-32 | 11. John 19:25-37 |
| 6. Mark 15:43-47 | 12. John 19:38-42 |

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The blessing of Easter food is traditional among most people of Eastern Europe, both those of the Orthodox and Catholic faiths. They include in their baskets almost the same foods: eggs, cheese, butter, ham, kolbasi, horseradish, salt and a candle. Among those who come from the present Slovakia, a type of meatloaf is included. It is called Polnina or Sekanice.

Many years ago, a friend, Ann, from the Cleveland area, brought a loaf when she visited us during Bright Week. I include her recipe for this delicious addition to my Easter menu.

SEKANICE (Easter Meat Loaf)

2 lbs. boneless veal
1 1/2 lbs. boneless pork shoulder
1 large onion
3/4 lb. saltine crackers
1 Tbls. chopped chives
18 eggs
2 cloves mashed garlic
salt and pepper to taste

Place meats and onion into a large pot. Add water to cover. Cook until meat is tender. Remove meat, reserve broth. Discard onion. Grind meat. Add crackers, salt, pepper and chives to about 4 cups of reserved broth that meat was cooked in. Beat eggs. Add with mashed garlic. Mix well. Add to greased baking pans until about 3/4 full. Bake uncovered at 350° about 1 1/2 hours or about 250° for 2 hours until brown and crusty. Most people bake theirs in a roasting pan after taking out some to make a small one to place in the Easter basket to bless. The small one will bake sooner.

## LIGHTER MOMENT

Have you heard about the person who wanted everything to be a sure thing? He finally bought a watch that he bragged would last forever. It was waterproof, shockproof, unbreakable, anti-magnetic, self-winding and would run many feet under water. He's looking for a new one. He lost the foolproof one.

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# WHAT KEEPS US FROM ASKING GOD FOR HELP?

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## WINTER'S GRACE

Hints of resurrection can be sensed in a green shoot growing out of an old tree stump and the awakening of plants from beneath the soil, frozen hard during the winter. We are heartened by such signs of new life and always stop to salute any flower that manages to grow through the snow still lying on the ground so late in the season.

Such springtime rebirths have particular meaning to us as Christians, in our belief in His death and Resurrection." However, one of the challenges of Great Lent and the Pascha/Easter Season is to find in the world around us signs of the transformations that are afoot in our lives. As Orthodox Christians, Christ's Resurrection is our core belief – and should be the touchstone for a crucial spiritual practice.

Remember a time when you brought hope to a depressed friend? You were doing your part to bring her back from the dead. Remember when tempers flared at your workplace, family or church congregation and you intervened to reconcile the embattled parties? That was practicing resurrection. Every time we bring hope and healing to a situation where there is despair and conflict, we are revealing Christ's kingdom. To embody our Lord's love, compassion, and forgiveness is to carry on the resurrection day by day.

When we forgive our enemies, feed the hungry, comfort the sick and suffering and speak out against injustices, we're living the resurrection under the Spirit's guidance. We must not let it be just a historical happening.

## LIGHTER MOMENT

Seeing a huge submarine, a little sardine began trembling. "Don't be afraid," said his mother. "It's only a can full of people."

## *Home Bible Reading Schedule*

### APRIL 2004

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Genesis 46:1-7 | 16. John 2:12-22 |
| 2. Genesis 49:33-50:26 | 17. John 3:22-33 |
| 3 John 11:1-45 | **18. John 20:19-21** |
| **4. John 12:1-18** | 19. John 2:1-11 |
| 5. Job 1:1-12 | 20. John 3:16-21 |
| 6. Job 1:13-22 | 21. John 5:17-24 |
| 7. Job 2:1-10 | 22. John 5:24-30 |
| 8. Matt 26:1-27:2 | 23. John 5:30-6:2 |
| 9. Matt 27:1-61 | 24. John 6:14-27 |
| 10. Matt 28:1-12 | **25. Mark 15:43-16:8** |
| **11. John 1:1-17** | 26. John 4:46-54 |
| 12. John 1:18-28 | 27. John 6:27-33 |
| 13. Luke 24:12-35 | 28. John 6:35-39 |
| 14. John 1:35-51 | 29. John 6:40-44 |
| 15. John 3:1-15 | 30. John 6:48-54 |

## BIBLE STUDY

Some years ago, a car manufacturer used a motto in its advertising that stressed the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations. It simply read: "Ask the man who owns one,:" knowing that there's nothing quite like a personal testimony from a satisfied customer.

When we go to our family physician and he tells us we need a specialist for some procedure or other, we ask him who he recommends, and usually select the person he names. The same goes for a neighbor who has just had some work done on his house. We ask if the contractor was good, did good work, etc. and ask if he would recommend him.

In the gospel of John 1:35-51 for Easter Wednesday, April 14, we read about St. Andrew, who went to his brother Simon Peter and exclaimed: "We have found the Messiah." He then "brought him to Jesus." (John 1:41-42) St. Andrew's personal encounter with Christ and the realization that He was the long-awaited Messiah prompted him to introduce Simon Peter to the Saviour. In other words, he recommended Him.

Do we recommend Christ and His holy church to others? We often have the opportunity to tell others what He has done for us and how He has satisfied our deepest spiritual need.

If we continue reading John 1 we will find that St. Andrew's recommendation to his brother Simon Peter started the selection process of the Apostles that were to follow Christ. It took just one recommendation by St. Andrew!

## BIBLE QUIZ

1. Who anointed a stone and dedicated it to God?
2. What holy man was anointed by an immoral woman?
3. What substance was usually used for anointing in Israel?
4. Who, according to James, should anoint the sick believer with oil?
5. What New Testament word means "anointed"?
6. Who was anointed by the Holy Spirit?
7. What Old Testament word means "anointed"?

ANSWERS:
1. Jacob (Genesis 28:18)
2. Jesus (Luke 7:38)
3. Olive Oil
4. The church elders (James 5:14)
5. Christ
6. Jesus (Matthew 3:16)
7. Messiah